



Handgun Purchase Decision Making

**Handgun Training Specialist
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Basic Selection Factors

What is the primary use of the handgun

- Sport/Target Shooting
- Hunting
- Home defense
- Concealed Carry



The handgun

- Handgun operation – keep it simple and safe
- Handgun size – does it fit your hand and needs
- Recoil management
- Trigger mechanism
- Weight
- Caliber
- Semi auto or revolver

Disassemble and clean – easy to field strip and reassemble is what you want

If you plan on carrying the handgun your clothes selection and where you will carry the gun will be a factor that will influence the selection process.

Physical size and strength of the owner and operator

Are there multiple users ? all would have to be able to operate the handgun

The costs of learning to shoot and stay proficient costs are dictated by the skill and time “learning curve” and ammunition cost it takes to become a safe and proficient shooter and the ammunition costs required to stay proficient. Training methods and a user friendly handgun can help keep costs within your budget.

Physical ability is required to shoot a handgun. You do not need to be an athlete but shooting requires minimum specific physical skill, agility and vision. We do a skills evaluation to asses these and recommend specific skill practice if necessary.

These are not necessarily listed in the order of importance

Also -----

1. What will you do with this gun?

- Concealed Carry
- Target Practice
- Both

2. What are your physical abilities or limitations?

- Hand, finger and upper body strength have an affect on the gun you select.
- Can you pull a 10 to 15 lb double action revolver trigger pull?
- Can you manually operate the slide on a semi auto?
- Can you control the recoil of the shot?
- Can you hold the gun at arms length?

3. Which gun best fits your hands?

The fit between the pistol and the hand affect how well you shoot. Because accuracy relies heavily on trigger control it is best if the trigger finger places properly on the trigger when the pistols backstrap is centered in the web of the hand

4. How much time will you commit to mastering the handgun?

A revolver is simple and easy to operate, therefore requiring less skill and time to master the weapon.

A pistol (semi-auto) requires more time to learn to operate, load and unload. While quality semi autos are very reliable, the shooter should know how to deal with potential semi auto operational problems, such as fail to fire, double feed, stove piping, failure to eject and failure to feed.

All semi autos require that you proof fire the ammunition you will carry for self defense to verify the operational reliability of the ammunition.

5. How will you carry the handgun?

- Fanny Pack
- Holster
- Belly Band
- Other
- Combination of all above

Some considerations for selecting a concealed carry handgun are:

- Size of handgun
- Caliber
- Weight
- Sights
- Barrel length
- Grip size
- Recoil control
- Ammunition capacity
- Dependability of handgun and carry gear
- **Concealability** - The firearm must be concealed in order to carry it legally.
- **Shootability** - You must be able to operate the firearm, understand its function, and manage the recoil.
- **Availability** – can you access it when you need it?
- Securing the handgun from accidentally dropping it or being disarmed.
- The handgun must be secured in some type of holster or concealed carry device
- Shooting Skill to save your life
- **Knock down power** - The firearm must have adequate power to stop an assailant from carrying out an attack against you.
- Double action trigger
- Select a firearm you are comfortable with.
- Understand how it functions.
- Make sure it meets your needs.
- Be sure it is a quality, dependable handgun
- Use appropriate ammunition

Your Goal: Access a secure, concealed handgun and fire accurate shots that stop the attacker.

This requires the selection of the proper concealed carry device

- The proper handgun
- Safe practice with your equipment
- Know your limitations

Pros and cons are:

Remember you have to be able to control the handgun and make consistent shot placements on the target.

- **Barrel length, weight and the ability to grip have a big effect on recoil control and shooting consistency.**
- Handguns with small grips are harder to hold onto and control
- The heavy and larger gun may be harder to conceal
- The heavy and larger gun is easier to shoot
- A small light handgun in a large caliber is harder to control than a larger handgun in the same caliber.
- Fanny packs allow the carry of larger handguns, but may restrict the carry of the handgun in other locations.

Best Semi-Auto

- Double Action Only
- Double Action with a de-cocker (with or without a manual safety)
- Examples are:
- See links for more information—

What is the most dependable handgun for you? Revolver or Semi Auto

Answer: **The one you can bet your life on!!**

The revolver is generally the best handgun for the casual carry person.

How to fit the gun to your hand



Hold the handgun as shown to the left. Your finger should be placed on the trigger as shown below.



See Below- The trigger finger should be able to reach the trigger as shown below. The fit between the pistol and the hand affect how well you shoot. Because accuracy relies heavily on trigger control it is best if trigger finger can be placed on the trigger as shown below when the pistols backstrap is centered in the web of the hand.

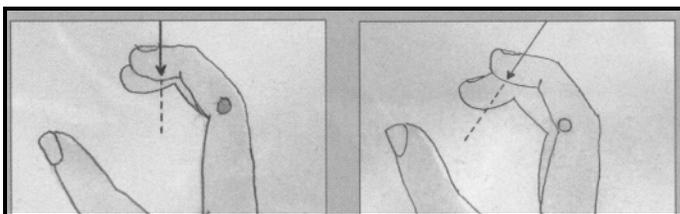
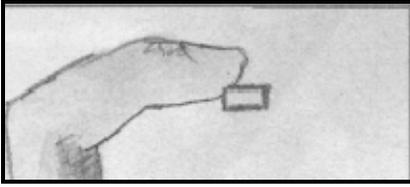


Figure 1

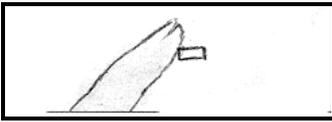
Figure 2

See above

When the trigger finger is moved correctly (Figure 1) the movement occurs at the first joint, and the direction of movement is almost parallel to the bore axis. With incorrect movement of the trigger finger (Figure 2) several muscles and finger joints are moved. Pressure is applied to the side of the trigger.



In this example above the finger is in contact with the edge of the trigger, which will result in lateral and inconsistent pressure.



Lateral pressure on the trigger produces pulled shots.



Using the tip of the finger can lead to lateral pressure on the trigger, which throws off the shot.

[My carry handguns](#)

- **Smith and Wesson model 442 Airweight 38 spc.**
- **[Ruger LCP .380](#)**
- **[Kel-Teck PF9 9mm](#)**
- **[Sig Sauer P-239 9mm](#)**

Revolver

Smith and Wesson Model 442 Airweight



Smith and Wesson Model 442 Airweight

- 38 special
- 5 shot
- Lightweight
- Easy to carry
- Small Grip
- Short Barrel

Standard grip



Hogue Grip installed – [see more](#)

Main use: Concealed Carry, not a true target gun.
Recessed rear sights and low profile front sight



Install a laser grip for improved accuracy

With this type handgun recoil and grip can be an issue.

Recoil control can be improved by using a lighter bullet
Such as Federal Hydra-shok 110 grain Person Self
Defense Round and installing larger rubber grips.

Smith and Wesson Model 49

**Becomes more controllable by switching to
Pachmayr rubber grips**



Without Rubber Grips



**Carry 5 rounds in a speed loader
for quick and easy loading**

**Add a laser and you have a small handgun that you can really shoot and hit your
target**



Ruger SP101

.357 Magnum

5 shot

2 inch Revolver

Recessed rear sight

Low profile front sight

Concealed Carry gun

Double action trigger pull only

Heavier than S&W 442, but when using .38 special rounds it is easier to control recoil than 442 above.



Ruger

- GP 100
- .357 Magnum
- 6 Rounds
- 4 " barrel
- Double and single action trigger

Raised front sight and adjustable rear sight is good Target and Concealed Carry handgun.

If carried concealed gun would most likely be carried in holster or fanny pack due to its size and weight.

Consideration Summary:

The handgun has to fit you hand

You need to be able to pull the trigger

You need to be able to manage the recoil to make consistent shot placement

Semi autos



Kel -Tec

Tip: Learn to read the Technical specifications on the manufactures web site:

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Calibers :	.380 AUTO
Weight unloaded lbs. :	8.3 oz.
Loaded magazine :	2.8 oz.
Length :	5.2"
Height :	3.5"
Width :	.77"
Sight radius :	3.8"
Muzzle Energy Max :	250 ft lbs
Capacity :	6 + 1 rounds
Trigger Pull :	5lbs



One of my carry handguns

Kel-Tek 9mm

PF-9

The PF-9 is a semi-automatic, locked breech pistol, chambered for the 9mm Luger cartridge. It has been developed from our highly successful P-11 and P-3AT pistols with maximum concealability in mind. The PF-9 has a single stack magazine holding 7 rounds. It is the lightest and flattest 9 mm ever made. Firing mechanism is Double-Action Only with an automatic hammer block safety. The PF-9 will be available in blued, parkerized, and hard chrome finishes. Grips will be in black, grey, and olive drab.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Calibers:	9mm Luger	9 x 19 mm
Weight unloaded:	12.7 oz.	360g
Loaded magazine:	5.5 oz.	156g
Length:	5.85"	149mm
Height:	4.3"	109mm
Width:	0.88"	22mm
Barrel Length:	3.1"	79mm
Capacity:	7 + 1	
Trigger Pull:	5 lbs	22.2N

Ruger LCP .380



One of my carry handguns – [see more](#)

All Models:	
Caliber:	.380 Auto
Capacity:	6+1
Length:	5.16"
Width:	0.82"
Height:	3.60"
Barrel Material:	Alloy Steel
Barrel Finish:	Blued
Slide Material:	Alloy Steel
Slide Finish:	Blued
Grip Frame:	Black, High Performance, Glass-Filled Nylon

Sig Saur –P239

One of my primary concealed carry handguns



- First shot double action, others single action
- Decocker
- Hammer and firing pin system

Target and Concealed carry



Glock

Number of safeties	3			
Length (slide)	174 mm	6.85 in.	174 mm	6.85 in.
Height ²⁾	127 mm	5.00 in.	127 mm	5.00 in.
Width	30 mm	1.18 in.	30 mm	1.18 in.
Length between sights ³⁾	152 mm	5.98 in.	152 mm	5.98 in.
Barrel length	102 mm	4.02 in.	102 mm	4.02 in.
Length of twist	250 mm	9.84 in.	250 mm	9.84 in.
Barrel profile	right hand twist, hexagonal profile			
Magazine capacity ⁴⁾	10 / 15 / 17 (31)			

Glock

- 9mm
- .40
- .45
- .357
- .380
- Double action
- Striker fired
- No de-cocker
- Trigger safety
- Same trigger and safety system as “Springfield XD”

Semi auto considerations

- You must be able to manual operate the slide
- The handgun must fit you hand
- Can you pull a double action trigger
- Know the type of handgun trigger mechanisms
- What type of “safety devise” are on the gun

Summary

- There are many quality handguns on the market.
- Revolvers are simpler to operate and less prone to operating malfunctions
- Be sure you know how your handgun operates
- If you have a semi auto you should know how to clear operating malfunctions caused by the gun or ammunition

Handguns come in many sizes and calibers. Pick one that’s meets “your needs” and practice with your equipment.

The Language of Handguns

Firearms, like many products, are mechanical and have their own terminology and jargon. We offer this alphabetized glossary of terms to help you get started.

Cocked: A gun is cocked when the hammer is pulled back and set under spring tension. Most guns discharge when the trigger is released and the weight of the spring power slams the hammer forward and consequently the firing pin strikes the ammunition. Depending on the gun’s design, the hammer may be cocked manually (with one’s thumb) for a light, short trigger pull; by pressing the double-action trigger (called trigger cocking) for a longer, heavier trigger pull or by the action of a semi-automatic pistol’s slide (when its rearward movement cocks the hammer.)

Decock: Lowering the cocked hammer on a loaded chamber without discharging the gun, usually accomplished on semi-autos by pressing a decocking lever. (Though riskier, some semi-automatics and all revolvers are de-cocked manually, by simultaneously pressing the trigger while easing the hammer down with one’s fingers.)

Double-Action-Only (DAO): A revolver or semi-automatic pistol which only fires through trigger cocking (double action); never from a cocked hammer (single action). Semi-auto Dao’s mechanically lower the hammer after each shot. DAO revolvers are set up to eliminate the option of single-action firing altogether.

Double-Action Revolver: A revolver that can be discharged two ways: first, by simply pulling the trigger, which cocks, then releases the hammer; second, by manually thumb-cocking the hammer then pressing the trigger. Double-action revolvers differ from cowboy-style single-action revolvers, which must be thumb-cocked for every shot.

Double Action (Semi-Automatic): A hybrid pistol that can be initially discharged through trigger cocking; in all subsequent shots, the slide's movement cocks the hammer for single-action operation

Manual safety or thumb safety: Usually a lever mounted toward the rear of the slide, or the frame below the slide, designed to prevent discharge, even if the trigger is pressed. This is mechanically accomplished by blocking the trigger, hammer or firing pin.

Semi-automatic pistol: A hand-gun fed by a magazine and de-signed to discharge one cartridge with each trigger pull. When fired, force from the discharge drives the slide back, ejecting the empty case; when the slide returns, it moves one cartridge from the magazine into the chamber. Sometimes called "autos" or "autoloaders," because the ammunition is fed from the magazine into the chamber automatically.

Single Action (Semi-Automatic): A pistol that will only fire if the hammer is cocked, either manually or by the gun's firing cycle. Most common example is the 1911 Government Model.

Striker-fired: Semi-auto pistol where the hammer and firing pin are replaced with a spring-tensioned punch. The trigger releases the striker to impact the cartridge's primer. Some designs place partial spring pressure on the striker, but obstruct it with an internal block to prevent discharge without pressure on the trigger.

Striker-fired: Semi-auto pistol where the hammer and firing pin are replaced with a spring-tensioned punch. The trigger releases the striker to impact the cartridge's primer. Some designs place partial spring pressure on the striker, but obstruct it with an internal block to prevent discharge without pressure on the trigger.

One-Stop Shopping

Beretta USA

17601 Indian Head Hwy Accokeek, MD 20607 (800) 797-2205 www.berettausa.com

Colt's Mfg. Co., LLC

P. O. Box 1868

Hartford, CT 06144 (800) 962-COLT

www.colt.com

CZ-USA

3327 N. 7th St.

Kansas City, KS 66115

(800) 955-4486

www.cz-usa.com

Detonics USA

115 Enterprise Dr., Ste. B

Pendergrass, GA 30567

(866) 759-1169

www.detonicsusa.com

Glock, Inc.

6000 Highlands Pkwy.

Smyrna, GA 30082

(770) 432-1202

www.glock.com

Heckler & Koch

21480 Pacific Blvd.

Sterling, VA 20166

(703) 450-1900

www.hk-usa.com

Kahr Arms

1 Blue Hill Plaza

P.O. Box 1518

Pearl River, NY 10965

(845) 735-4500

www.Kahr.com

Kel-Tec CNC Ind., Inc.

P. O. Box 236009

Cocoa, FL 32923

(321) 631-0068
www.kel-tec.com

Kimber Mfg., Inc.
1 Lawton St.
Yonkers, NY 10705 (406) 758-2222
www.kimberamerica.com

North American Arms, Inc.
2150 South 950
East, Provo, UT 84606
(800) 821-5783
www.northamericanarms.com

Para-Ordnance Mfg. Inc.
980 Tapscott Road
Scarborough, ON, Canada M1X1C3
(416) 297-7855
www.paraord.com

SIGARMS
18 Industrial Drive
Exeter, NH 03833
(603) 772-2302
www.sigarms.com

Smith & Wesson
2100 Roosevelt Ave.
Springfield, MA 01104
(800) 331-0852
www.smith-wesson.com

Springfield Armory
420 W. Main
Geneseo, IL 61254
(800) 680-6866
www.springfieldarmory.com

Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc.

200 Ruger Road
Prescott, AZ 86301
(928) 541-8820
www.ruger.com

Taurus International

16175 NW 49th Ave. Miami, FL 33014
(800) 327-3776
www.taurususa.com

Walther

2100 Roosevelt Ave.
Springfield, MA 01104
(800) 372-6454
www.waltheramerica.com

Ammunition Manufacturers

<http://www.federalcartridge.com/default.asp?menu=1&s1=7>

<http://www.winchester.com/>

<http://www.remington.com/products/ammunition/>